



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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Helena Area Resource Office
930 Custer Ave. W
Helena, MT 59601

January 27, 1999

TO: Governor's Office, Julie Lapeyre, Room 204, State Capitol, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Room 106, POB 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, POB 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Director's Office
Wildlife Division
Legal Unit
FWP Commissioners
State Bulletin Board
Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, POB 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
Montana State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., POB 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800
Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, POB 595, Helena, MT 59624
George Ochenski, POB 689, Helena, MT 59624
Glen Hockett, 745 Doane Road, Bozeman, MT 59715
Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771
Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923
Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624
Prickly Pear Sportsmen's Assoc., 219 Vawter St., Helena, MT 59601
Broadwater Co. Commissioners, County Courthouse, Townsend, MT 59644
Mark Ahner, Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, 8001 N. Montana Ave., Helena, MT 59602
Stephanie Utter, U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Montana Area Office, P.O. Box 30137, Billings, MT 59107-0137
Representative Gay Ann Masolo, 20 Buck Drive, Townsend, MT 59644
Senator Duane Grimes, #4 Hole in the Wall, Clancy, MT 59634

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for a proposed transplant of wild turkeys on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area (CFWMA) near Townsend, MT. This draft EA is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., February 15, 1999. Please direct your questions or comments to Tom Carlsen, P.O. Box 998, Townsend, MT 59644.

Sincerely,

Michael Korn
Helena Area Coordinator

Broadwater

UPPER MISSOURI RIVER TURKEY TRANSPLANT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action Merriam's Turkey Transplant
2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
3. Name of Project Upper Missouri River Merriam's Turkey Transplant
4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency) NA
5. If Applicable:
Estimated Commencement Date Winter 1998/99 or Winter 1999/2000 depending on availability
Estimated Completion Date NA
Current Status of Project Design (% complete) NA
6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)
Broadwater County; along Missouri River in Townships 7-8 North and Ranges 1 and 2 East; primary habitat occurs on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area (CFWMA)
7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>1000</u>
residential	<u>--</u>		
industrial	<u>--</u>	(e) Productive:	
		irrigated cropland . .	<u>1000</u>
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	<u>2000</u>	dry cropland	<u> </u>
		forestry	<u> </u>
• Wetlands/Riparian Areas	<u>500</u>	rangeland	<u> </u>
		other	<u> </u>

Potential turkey habitats on the CFWMA are comprised of a mature cottonwood riverbottom with a mix of grass, forb, and shrub understories and scattered open meadows. Shrub understory species include wild rose, Rocky Mountain juniper, snowberry, buffaloberry, willow, and golden currant. In some areas, the cottonwood riverbottom is over ½ mile wide. Adjacent pastures, hayfields, and irrigated croplands on the CFWMA may also provide seasonal habitats for turkeys (e.g. winter feeding and brood rearing).

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.
9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.

The proposed action is to trap Merriam's turkeys from other wild populations in Montana and transplant a minimum of 20 birds along the Missouri River on the CFWMA. Included in this proposal is a supplemental release of turkeys during the following year to ensure turkeys are given the best possible chance of developing into a sustainable population.

There are presently no known wild or domestic turkeys in the area. The purpose of this project is to establish a turkey population which would enhance biological diversity and provide additional wildlife viewing, listening, and hunting opportunity.




The CFWMA release site is administered by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) for the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). Reclamation has been consulted with and they have no comments as to the transplant project. CFWMA is managed to "Provide productive habitat for the diversity of wildlife species that utilize the area and provide for consumptive and non-consumptive use of those resources" (FWP 1992). Management direction for CFWMA further promotes the release of turkeys (FWP 1992:35-36).

Turkeys were successfully transplanted along the Jefferson River near Cardwell, MT during the winter 1992/93. The turkeys from this transplant have increased in number and expanded their distribution. Habitats along the Jefferson River are very similar to the potential turkey habitats described for this project.

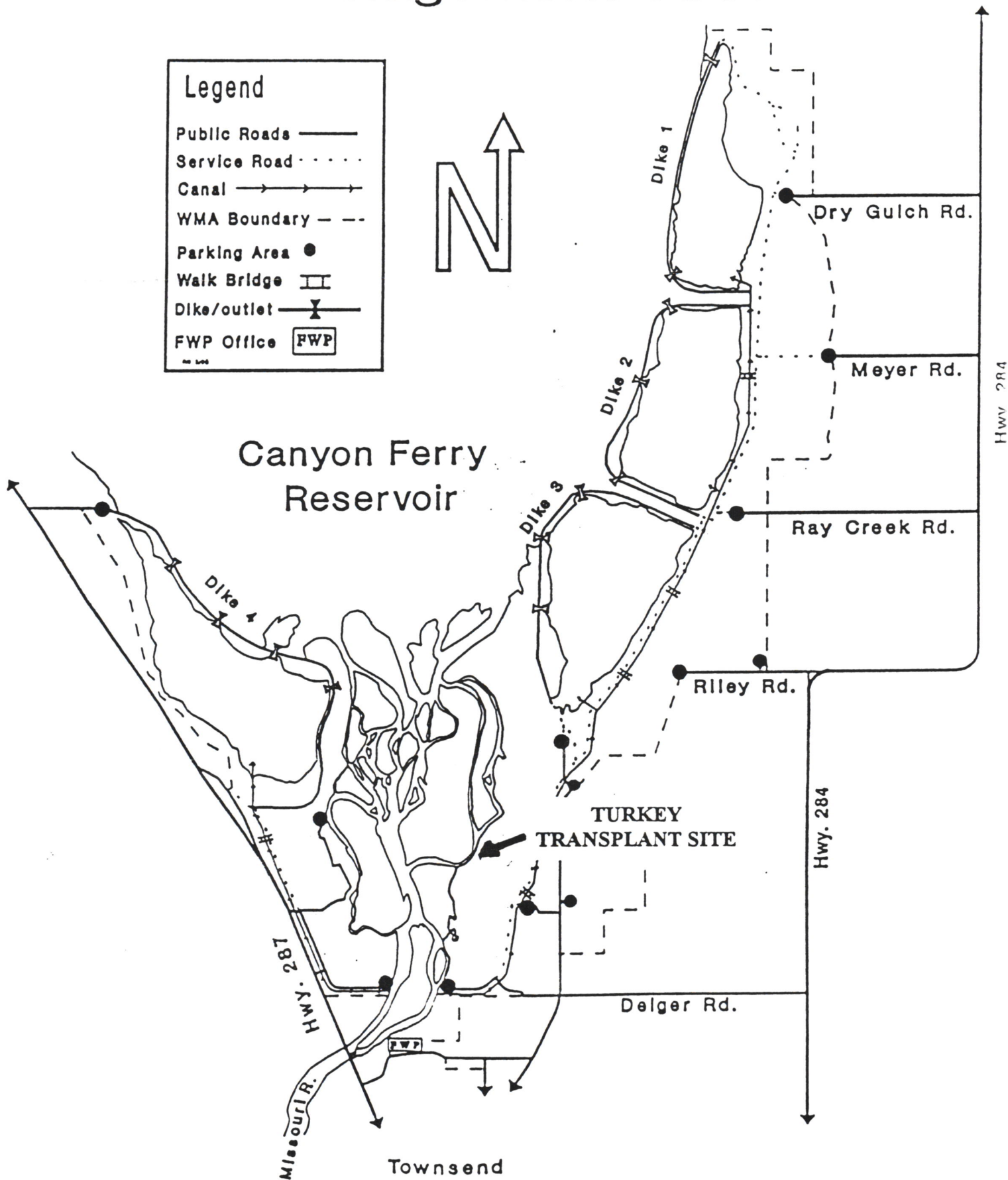
This project cannot proceed without prior approval of the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission. Given Commission approval, transplant efforts may ensue as early as winter 1998/99 or as soon as turkeys become available. A turkey hunting season, as authorized by the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission, will be initiated if/when population levels reach a sufficient size for sustaining a harvest. Population monitoring will be based on casual sightings and winter surveys at areas of concentration.

Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area

Legend

- Public Roads ———
- Service Road ·····
- Canal ———>——>——>
- WMA Boundary - - -
- Parking Area ●
- Walk Bridge 
- Dike/outlet 
- FWP Office 

NO. 5406



10. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
N/A	

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
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U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	Administer CFWMA release site
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11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Bureau of Land Management
Montana Historical Society-State Historic Preservation Office

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other (list)		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- Q Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ♦For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. ♦For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- ⊕ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				4 a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
f. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4 a. Habitats on CFWMA are presently managed to maintain and/or enhance upland game bird productivity. The success of this project, if implemented, will be enabled by these current management efforts. We anticipate habitats upstream from CFWMA will not require additional habitat enhancements. Habitat enhancements may, however, be used where landowners are interested in improving habitats or for mitigating depredation problems, should they occur.

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► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. FISH/WILDLIFE	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X			5 b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?			X			5 b.
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?	X					5 g.
h. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)			X			5 h.
i. ♦For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)			X			5 b.
j. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

5 b. Turkeys did not occur in this area historically. There appears however to be a vacant niche for them which would not result in conflicts with other wildlife in the area. Through transplanting turkeys, the diversity of wildlife would increase. If successful, the outcome of this project would translate into greater wildlife viewing, listening, and hunting opportunity.

Wild turkeys are known to be susceptible to diseases which commonly occur in domestic poultry. In addition, domestic turkeys are considered genetically inferior to wild strains. Interbreeding with domestics could reduce the vigor of a wild turkey population. There are no known poultry operations in the area. There are also no known domestic turkeys in the vicinity of this proposal.

5 g. With the availability of an additional wildlife species (i.e. Merriam's turkeys), there is a higher potential for poaching activities. Wildlife species which presently occur in the area are not expected to be negatively impacted by this project.

5 h. Bald eagles frequent CFWMA and sections of river upstream during winter and late spring apparently in search of waterfowl and winter kill fish. In addition, an active bald eagle nest occurs on a river island approximately 4

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miles south of the mouth of Deep Creek, outside what we consider to be primary turkey range. We do not anticipate this project having any significant impacts on bald eagles.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. There may be minor impact on existing noise levels in the area resulting from male Merriam's turkeys gobbling in the spring. There will be no other noise/electrical impacts.

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◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?			X		yes	7
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7 a. CFWMA includes well developed riparian areas and adjacent agricultural leases managed by FWP, affording high quality potential habitat for turkeys. CFWMA is currently managed for a variety of wildlife including upland game birds. Ongoing habitat development projects which would benefit turkeys, include planting shelterbelts for winter cover and food, planting dense herbaceous plots for hiding cover, and setting aside standing grain for winter food. Because habitats neighboring CFWMA are not as well suited for turkeys, the birds are not expected to make substantial use of adjacent private lands.

Riparian habitat along the Missouri River on the CFWMA is also expected to provide all the habitat components necessary for sustaining a turkey population. There are a variety of natural foods associated with a moist riparian environment (i.e. forbs, grass, and fruit bearing shrubs). There may, however, be minor impact to the profitability of existing land use resulting from damage to haystacks by Merriam's turkeys in winter and possible damage to standing crops of grain. Depredation or other problems caused by turkeys can be mitigated through a variety of means including: 1) increased hunter harvest; 2) trapping and transplanting turkeys to other sites; 3) fencing haystacks; 4) hazing; and 5) habitat enhancements (e.g. purchase standing grain through UGBHEP for winter food) which may offset landowner costs associated with maintaining a turkey population.

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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ♦For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- ◊ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Commen Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?			X			9 d.
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9 d. By creating more wildlife viewing opportunity in the Townsend area, there is a potential for increased visitors which may lead to minor additional outside income for the community.

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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:			X			10 a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?			X			10 b.
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
• e. Define projected revenue sources						10 e.
• f. Define projected maintenance costs.						10 e.
g. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10 a. Upon completion of the transplant, additional government operations may include: population monitoring through annual surveys; habitat enhancements (UGBHEP) to benefit turkeys and other upland game birds; responding to turkey depredation problems if they occur; monitoring the turkey population; and developing/enforcing hunting regulations.

10 b. If the transplant is successful, additional revenues may be generated through sale of turkey permits. With increased hunting opportunity, this proposed project would probably increase local interest in turkey hunting.

10 e. Budgets used for the turkey transplant project may be from game damage funds from the region in which turkeys are trapped and/or wildlife program funds. There are few maintenance costs associated with this project. Costs arising from additional potential operations described in 10 a. above would be covered by existing annual budgets. Habitat enhancement costs would be funded through the UGBHEP. Costs for mitigating potential depredation problems would be funded through the existing game damage budget.

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• Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?			X			11 b.
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X			11 b.
d. ♦For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11 b. If successful, the proposed action would enhance the area's aesthetic character and would create additional wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities for the public.

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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		X				
e. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

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Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ♦For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		no				
g. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		none				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

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2. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Alternative 1. Release turkeys as proposed but utilizing a subspecies other than Merriam's (i.e. Rio Grande turkeys). A recent turkey transplant proposed for an area near Big Timber (Simmons., C. 1995. Crazy D Ranch Turkey Transplant Environmental Assessment. FWP. 10pp.) had, as an alternative, to release the Rio Grande subspecies of turkey because of their apparent superior adaptation and/or preference to deciduous riparian habitats. This would require modifying an existing Administrative Rule of Montana (12.9.105a) which states that "The western variety or subspecies known as Merriam's wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo merriami*) shall be the only variety released or transplanted in the state of Montana."

Alternative 2. (No Action Alternative) Under this alternative no turkeys would be released and benefits associated with the Proposed Action would not be realized. This alternative would have no impact to the existing physical or human environment.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

If depredation problems occur, they could be mitigated through additional hunter harvest as well as traditional hazing techniques (e.g. scare guns and cracker shells) and fencing of haystacks. Mitigation may also be available through FWP's Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement Program (UGBHEP). Interested landowners who qualify for UGBHEP may be reimbursed for habitat costs associated with maintaining a turkey population (e.g. purchase of standing grain, creating winter cover, nesting cover, etc.).

4. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An EIS is not required. The EA checklist is an appropriate level of analysis because most of the effects of the proposed action would be beneficial and any negative impacts are minor and can be mitigated as previously discussed.

5. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

Several landowners along the Missouri River upstream from the CFWMA were personally contacted to discuss the turkey introduction project and are supportive of this proposal. The draft EA will be sent to a standard mailing list, posted on the State bulletin board, and a legal notice placed in local newspapers describing the project and the availability of the EA.

All agencies (Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management) that administer land in the area involved in this proposal have been contacted and have had the opportunity to review this EA prior to distribution. Letters of support for this Proposed Action from these agencies have been received and are located in the Project File at the FWP office in Townsend.

6. Duration of comment period if any:

There will be a 20 day comment period starting the day the legal notice appears in the local paper.

7. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Tom Carlsen, Wildlife Biologist
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
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PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Discussion of specific items in the checklist EA are located at the end of their respective sections.